

## DEPUTY PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE



I'm pleased to share the Board's first newsletter for 2024, and extend an especially warm welcome to the class of 2023 graduates who started practising in recent months.

Board updates in this edition include a discussion of "spectrum of care practice", and guidance on social media and responding to a cyberattack. We have published a new factsheet to assist in conversations with pet owners about appropriate care options for their animals, revised our guideline on veterinary specialists and emergency services, and posted answers to FAQs about Guidelines 1 to 8 on our website.

Late last year, we shared the Government's public comment draft of the Animal Care and Protection Bill to replace the POCTA Act. This consultation closes on 25 March, and I encourage all veterinarians to give their feedback on this important change. You are also invited to participate in a consultation on Victoria's first cat management strategy and an AVA survey on unpaid or discounted work.

Agriculture Victoria has provided updates on emergency animal disease preparedness including the launch of a new biosecurity training hub. Any training undertaken would count towards your CPD, as would engaging with any of the information in this newsletter or on our website.

Dr Kate Clarke

**Deputy President**

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## SPECTRUM OF CARE PRACTICE

Complaints to the Board about diagnosis or the clinical management of animals are assessed on a case-by-case basis.

Rather than assessing whether a veterinary practitioner met a “gold standard” or provided “state of the art” care, the Board’s general approach is to assess whether a vet not only considered available evidence-based medicine but was also responsive to the context of the case and discussed a spectrum of care options with the owner.

The Board will look at whether a vet considered relevant contextual factors in their approach to diagnosis and clinical management, clearly communicated a continuum of diagnostic and care options to the animal's owner, and documented that discussion sufficiently.

The Board's approach aligns with the new Day One Competencies for veterinary graduates developed by the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC), which came into effect in January 2024.

These competencies describe the knowledge, skills, values, and attitudes veterinarians must possess from the first day of their professional careers.

Day One Competency Number 7 expects that a vet should be able to ‘tailor the diagnostic, treatment, preventive, and control plans when providing veterinary services, considering animal welfare, client expectations and economic contexts. They must be mindful of the welfare of the patient(s), whether for an individual animal or a group of animals. They should be able to contextualise and customise the patient’s diagnostic, treatment and preventive health plans and provide a spectrum of care when there may be financial or other constraints.’

Using a “spectrum of care” approach is not new, but it has become more central to veterinary practice as more pet owners struggle with the cost of living. In recent years, there have also been efforts to integrate spectrum of care practice into the veterinary school curriculum.

Contextual factors that may assist a vet to tailor appropriate care options include:

- **the animal's wellbeing and welfare**, e.g., the animal's individual characteristics and temperament, their symptoms and their quality of life (clients may be able to afford treatment but is treatment likely to be futile?)
- **client/owner factors**, e.g., their financial resources (to meet initial and long-term costs), their ability to comply with the logistics of treatment (including time factors), their values and beliefs, expectations, and care goals
- **veterinarian factors**, e.g., their knowledge and skills
- **practice factors**, e.g., expertise and availability of equipment, and
- **scientific evidence and professional guidelines.**

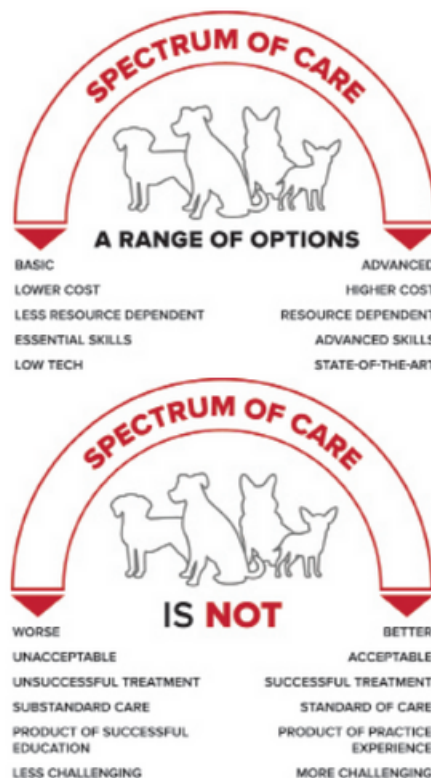
Based on these factors, the range of care options a vet presents to and develops with a client will vary. Along the continuum of acceptable care, a vet and their client may consider multiple options from more conservative and less expensive approaches including less intensive diagnostic workup and symptomatic

treatment, through to more intensive, usually more expensive, state-of-the-art diagnostics and treatment.

While the aim is for both vet and client to have input in deciding the best possible plan for the animal, the vet is responsible for advising the client of:

- the advantages, disadvantages, and most likely outcomes for each option presented
- the possibilities of favourable and unfavourable outcomes

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Fingland et al, 'Preparing veterinary students for excellence in general practice: building confidence and competence by focusing on spectrum of care', AVMA Journal, Vol 259, Issue 5

## SPECTRUM OF CARE PRACTICE, CONTINUED...

- whether additional testing or treatment might be needed
- the strength of the supporting evidence for each option, and the costs associated with each option.

A vet can provide this information to a client in small sections, pausing to check whether the client understands the information presented.

In 'Spectrum of care: more than treatment options', Dr Carolyn Brown et al say, 'How care options are presented can be as important as which care options are presented.'

A client-centred approach, where the vet asks the owner open-ended questions and actively listens, may help the owner to share important information about the context.

When communicating with a client about care options, Dr Brown says, 'veterinarians should empower owners to choose the care option that best fits their expectations and financial considerations, without making them feel they are failing their pet if the most intensive, most expensive or most technologically advanced option is not chosen.'

She continues, 'For many conditions, there is not a single treatment option that will routinely result in the best outcome ... and many factors play a role in determining which outcome (e.g., survival time vs quality of life) is the "best" outcome and which care option is truly the best option for any specific patient and its owner.'

While conversations around choices for clinical management of an animal can be challenging and do take time, veterinary practitioners, animal owners and animals should all benefit when care options are discussed in context.

If you and your veterinary team are interested in learning more about the spectrum of care concept, the resources in the next column include example cases and communication tips.

## SPECTRUM OF CARE RESOURCES

- [AVBC Day One Competencies](#)
- Brown et al, 2021, [Spectrum of care: more than treatment options](#), Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association (JAVMA), Volume 259, Issue 7, 712-717
- Boatright, [What is the spectrum of care?](#) NewSTAT 2022 and [Embracing spectrum of care to promote early-career veterinary wellbeing](#) MentorVet 2023
- Quain, Ward and Mullan, 2021, [Ethical Challenges Posed by Advanced Veterinary Care in Companion Animal Veterinary Practice](#), Animals, 11 (11) 3010

## YOU, YOUR PET AND YOUR VET NEW FACTSHEET FOR PET OWNERS

The Board has produced a factsheet that may assist veterinary practitioners to have conversations with owners about appropriate care options for their animals now and in the future.



The factsheet covers pet owners' responsibilities to care for and protect their animals, including in emergency situations. It contains tips for pet owners on working with veterinary practitioners to help care for their pets. There is also a summary of the Board's expectations of animal owners.

*You, your pet and your vet* factsheet:

- [Web-based version with extra resources](#)
- [Printable version](#) (PDF)

## VETS ON SOCIAL MEDIA

In recent months, the Board has received complaints involving social media posts by veterinary practitioners.

When the Board receives a complaint involving social media use by a vet, it will consider if the relevant activity presents a risk to public safety or the health and wellbeing of animals; potentially breaches veterinary practice, privacy or other laws; may not be compliant with the Board's Guidelines; or otherwise risks the public's confidence in the profession. Based on its assessment, the Board may investigate the complaint.

Like everyone, vets have a right to communicate via social media. However, just as with face-to face and other communication, the Board expects all vets to maintain professional standards when engaging online or via social media. Vets are expected to act ethically and professionally with their peers, animal owners and the general public in all communications. Social media posts should not involve the abuse or discrimination of others or present a risk to the public or the health and wellbeing of animals.

### When using social media, you should:

- communicate professionally and respectfully with or about animal owners and their animals, your colleagues, employees and employer
- comply with appropriate standards of veterinary practice:
  - [Board Guidelines - Expected behaviours and principles of professional conduct](#)
  - [Guideline 4 - Communication between veterinary practitioner and owner or professional peers](#)
  - [Guideline 8 - Veterinary practitioner and veterinary team wellbeing](#)
- maintain professional boundaries
- comply with confidentiality and privacy obligations and avoid disclosing the personal information of other parties
- be careful about how you advertise services (you can use testimonials but you cannot unfavourably contrast another vet's services with yours). Offences relating to advertising and incitement of unprofessional conduct by vets and their employers are in sections 58 and 59 of the *Veterinary Practice Act 1997*).



The Board recommends that veterinary businesses develop a social media policy for the workplace (if you do not already have one). Sample guidance may be found at:

- [Example social media policy](#) - WorkSafe Victoria
- [Social media, privacy and the Workplace](#) - OVIC.

You are also encouraged to review any currently available posts and website materials and remove any material that may be unprofessional or breach the law.

## ARE YOU CYBER SECURE?

In 2022-23, nearly 94,000 reports about cyber security incidents were made to the Australian Cyber Security Centre - around one every 6 minutes.



The top cybercrime types for business are email compromise, business email compromise fraud, and online banking fraud. Ten per cent of all incidents responded to included ransomware. The average cost to small business of cybercrime was up 14 per cent.

The Board encourages all veterinary businesses to assess their vulnerability to cybercrime and prepare a cyber incident response plan. **It is a matter of when, not if, you'll be subject to a cyberattack, so being able to respond quickly is imperative.**

You will find useful resources at the Australian Cyber Security Centre, including:

- [Assess your cyber security practices using 'Exercise in a Box'](#)

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## ARE YOU CYBER SECURE? CONTINUED

- Read the Small Business Cyber Security Guide
- Create a Cyber Incident Response Plan & Response Readiness Checklist
- Report and recover - respond to cyber threats and take steps to protect your business from further harm

The Cyber Security Centre says, 'Depending on the impact and severity of the cyber incident, it may be necessary to communicate with external stakeholders.' Its Cyber Incident Response Plan contains a list of information to think about communicating to clients and other stakeholders.

What you communicate to clients and other stakeholders would depend on the type of information obtained by unauthorised third parties, e.g. personal or payment information.

Businesses may also wish to consult their indemnity insurer or seek legal advice to prepare for or respond to cyber incidents.

### More information:

- Australian Cyber Security Hotline - 1300 292 371
- ACSC enquiry form [www.cyber.gov.au/about-us/about-asd-acsc/contact-us](http://www.cyber.gov.au/about-us/about-asd-acsc/contact-us)
- [ACSC 2022-2023 statistics](#)

## REVISED SPECIALIST GUIDELINE

In December 2023, the Board issued a revised version of Guideline 17 - Emergency services and specialist veterinary services. The guideline addresses concerns that some veterinary businesses are stating or implying that their employees are veterinary specialists, when they are not, which is an offence under the *Veterinary Practice Act 1997*.

All veterinary practitioners and businesses should review online and other advertising, signage and communications to ensure they are not committing an offence. Relevant issues are explained in the guideline:

A veterinary specialist is a registered veterinary practitioner who has been endorsed by the Board as having an exceptionally high level of skill in a particular branch of veterinary medicine or surgery that is well above that of a general practitioner in the same discipline.

A veterinary specialist must have undergone extensive advanced supervised training, culminating in the passing of a rigorous set of examinations. Generally, veterinary specialists are endorsed by the Board based on recommendations made by the Australasian Veterinary Boards Council (AVBC).

Vets who have been endorsed as veterinary specialists by the Board can be located by surname or specialisation on the Board's website at [Search for a Vet](#).

A veterinary practitioner must not claim to be qualified to practise as a veterinary specialist or use titles that may give the impression that they are a specialist if they have not been endorsed by the Board as a veterinary specialist in a particular branch of veterinary medicine or surgery.

The Board recognises that some general veterinary practitioners may have many years' experience practising in particular areas of veterinary medicine or surgery. However, they should be careful not to mislead animal owners and members of the public that they are a veterinary specialist or have specialist-level skills in a particular branch of veterinary medicine or surgery if they are not endorsed as a specialist. Victorian veterinary practice legislation also prohibits false or misleading advertising.

A key question is, 'Could anything in any publicly available information or communicated to animal owners or professional peers give the impression that a veterinary practitioner is a veterinary specialist?'. For example, it could be misleading if information about a veterinary practitioner:

- contains words ending in "ist", e.g., dermatologist, oncologist, radiologist
- is associated with a scope of work such as a particular animal species or breed, or a particular condition, e.g., "alpaca vet", "dachshund vet", "skin vet", "glaucoma vet" or "cancer vet"

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## REVISED SPECIALIST GUIDELINE CONTINUED...

- highlights a list of qualifications, publications and CPD or uses post-nominals (abbreviations of membership or qualifications) inappropriately.

Inappropriate use of post-nominals would include referring to a membership if a veterinary practitioner is no longer a financial member of an association (e.g., ANZCVS if no longer a member of the Australian and New Zealand College of Veterinary Surgeons) or using the letters MRCVS in Australia if membership of the Royal College of Veterinary Surgeons was obtained solely through registration (not examination).

**Board recommendation:** General veterinary practitioners who wish to highlight their experience practising in particular areas of veterinary medicine or surgery should prominently state that they are not a veterinary specialist on relevant website pages and in other communications.

View the Guideline:

- [Emergency services and specialist services](#)
- Download print version from [www.vetboard.vic.gov.au/VPRBV/VPRBV\\_Guidelines/Guidelines\\_TOC.aspx](http://www.vetboard.vic.gov.au/VPRBV/VPRBV_Guidelines/Guidelines_TOC.aspx) (scroll to bottom of the page).

## NEW FAQs FOR GUIDELINES 1 TO 8

The Board has published answers to Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) about Guidelines 1 to 8 underneath each of those guidelines on the website.



Here are some of the FAQs we've responded to:

- *A colleague at my clinic saw an animal: am I able to supply medication on this basis even though I didn't personally see the animal?* Answer at [Guideline 1 - Veterinary practitioner-owner-animal relationship](#)
- *What are some general indicators for establishing an animal's wellbeing? What resources are there for pet owners about animal welfare and wellbeing?* [Guideline 2 - Animal wellbeing](#)
- *What are a vet's obligations to treat wildlife?* [Guideline 3: Treatment obligations](#)
- *How should a veterinary practitioner respond to a complaint about their services?* [Guideline 4: Communication between veterinary practitioner and owner or professional peers](#)
- *Are there any obligations on veterinary practitioners relating to reuniting lost pets with their owners?* [Guideline 5: Reunification of pets and owners](#)
- *What can veterinary nurses and technicians do?* [Guideline 6: Veterinary facilities, equipment and assistance in the provision of veterinary services](#)
- *Who owns a veterinary medical record: the veterinary practitioner or the owner?* [Guideline 7 - Veterinary medical records](#)
- *Where can a veterinary practitioner obtain support to maintain their wellbeing?* [Guideline 8 - Veterinary practitioner and veterinary team wellbeing](#)

## NEW SPECIALISTS IN VICTORIA

Congratulations to the veterinary practitioners newly endorsed as specialists since November 2023:

**Dr Georgina Beaumont**, endorsed as a specialist in Veterinary Anaesthesia & Analgesia on 20 February 2024

**Dr Jennifer Kan**, endorsed as a specialist in Veterinary Radiology on 20 February 2024

**Professor Maria (Paula) Larenza**, endorsed as a specialist in Veterinary Anaesthesia & Analgesia on 20 February 2024

**Dr Stuart Mason**, endorsed as a specialist in Veterinary Reproduction on 9 January 2024

**Dr Bonnie Purcell**, endorsed as a specialist in Small Animal Medicine on 13 February 2024

**Dr Michelle Sutherland**, endorsed as a specialist in Avian Medicine & Surgery on 9 January 2024

In addition to the the above specialists, the Board also reinstated the specialist endorsements of Dr Peter Bennett, Specialist in Small Animal Medicine & Veterinary Oncology - on 20 February 2024, and Dr Christopher Preston, Specialist in Small Animal Surgery - on 12 March 2024.

## REGISTRATION OBLIGATIONS & HOUSEKEEPING

The 2023-24 registration year ends on 30 June 2024.

Here are some tips to prepare for 1 July 2024:

- **Sign into your account** to check that your residential address, practice address, email and mobile phone are current. We will use these details to contact you at renewal. You are legally required to update your residential and practice address within 28 days of any change (s19 *Veterinary Practice Act 1997*). Sign in: [www.vetboard.vic.gov.au/myaccount](http://www.vetboard.vic.gov.au/myaccount)
- **Complete and record your CPD** so you can declare you've met CPD obligations at renewal: [CPD requirements](#)
- **Thinking of retiring or stopping practice for a while?** You can keep your registration, convert to non-practising registration or surrender your registration. **Forms:** [Surrender registration](#) / [Convert to non-practising registration](#)
- **Veterinary employers and team, please check that vets working in your practice are registered in Victoria** via [Search for a Vet](#). Tell veterinary practitioners who have relocated from New South Wales, Tasmania and Western Australia that they are legally required to register in Victoria. They must lodge a registration application by 14 June for registration to start 1 July 2024. **Application forms:** [General registration](#) or [Re-registration](#)



**HAVE YOUR SAY AT ENGAGE VICTORIA BY 26 APRIL:**  
[Victorian cat management strategy](#)

## HAVE YOUR SAY ON VICTORIA'S NEW ANIMAL LAWS BY 25 MARCH



Victoria's draft Animal Care and Protection Bill and explanatory materials are available on the Victorian Government's Engage Victoria website.

This is your **final opportunity for feedback** on the Bill to replace the current Prevention of Cruelty to Animals Act 1986. A new Act would explicitly recognise that animals are sentient. It would introduce basic care requirements for animals into Victorian law for the first time and reform the approach to cruelty offences.

A new framework would be introduced relating to procedures on animals, including clarifying when some procedures are allowed. Regulations would set out detailed requirements for specific species and activities involving animals. The new Act would not come into force for at least two years to enable new regulations to be developed. **The first consultation on the current regulations** has opened alongside the draft Bill consultation.

**HAVE YOUR SAY AT ENGAGE VICTORIA:**  
[Reforming Victoria's animal care and protection laws](#)

## CONSULTATION ON FIRST STATEWIDE CAT MANAGEMENT STRATEGY



The Victorian Government has released the state's first long-term cat management strategy (draft strategy) for public comment.

The 10-year state-wide strategy aims to provide an integrated and coordinated approach to cat management across Victoria and improve the welfare of cats while protecting wildlife.

The draft strategy focuses on responsible cat ownership, desexing and containment, urban cat population control, feral cat management and improving collaboration, laws and processes. It was developed after extensive research and consultation with a variety of stakeholders, including councils, animal welfare organisations, land managers, conservation groups and veterinary professionals.

Veterinary professionals are encouraged to share their views by 26 April 2024, to help develop a practical and realistic strategy about how cats will be managed over the next 10 years.

## REHOMING PETS REFORMS

The Victorian Government recognises the valuable services provided by Victoria's pet rehoming sector and is committed to supporting the sector to continue delivering its important work.

Animal Welfare Victoria (AWV) is progressing the recommendations of the Taskforce on Rehoming Pets, which was established to investigate and provide recommendations to the Government on improvements to the sector:

- In mid-2023, stakeholder workshops were conducted with the rehoming sector on key themes aligned with the taskforce's recommendations. Workshop summary: Pet rehoming sector reforms (AWV)

- A Rehoming Pets Working Group (working group) was established, comprising rehoming sector members, rescue groups, foster carers, councils, pounds, research and teaching organisations and animal welfare groups. List of members: Pet rehoming sector reforms (AWV).

For updates on the rehoming pet reforms, please subscribe to the newsletter.

Queries can be directed to [pet.reforms@agriculture.vic.gov.au](mailto:pet.reforms@agriculture.vic.gov.au)



## TREATING BATS IN VICTORIA

The Board expects veterinary practitioners to provide pain relief to an animal presented to them where the animal would be in unreasonable pain or suffering if it did not receive pain relief, and should euthanise an animal that is distressed, diseased or disabled to such an extent that its condition cannot be satisfactorily relieved by veterinary care (Board Guideline 18.1 – End of life services and POCTA ss9(1)(c) and 24D(b)).

This expectation extends to wildlife presented to an open veterinary business during normal hours.

However, the situation is different when a bat is presented to a clinic, because those who have close contact with bats and other animals are at increased risk of contracting Australian bat lyssavirus (ABLV).

ABLV has been found in flying foxes, fruit bats (macro bats) and insect-eating microbat species and is widely distributed across Australia. This rare but serious zoonotic illness affects the central nervous system and is highly fatal. Symptoms of ABLV may occur within days or up to several years after exposure (but usually within 2 to 3 months).

***Only appropriately vaccinated and trained people should handle bats.*** Vets who handle bats or other potentially infected animals or materials should have a current rabies vaccination. Classical rabies virus is closely related to ABLV, and the rabies vaccine is believed to provide cross-protection. Blood testing every 3 years is also recommended, to check if a booster rabies vaccine is required. Rabies vaccines are currently not government-subsidised for vets unless they are also volunteer Australian wildlife handlers.

As well as being vaccinated, vets must be appropriately trained to respond to incidents:

- When handling bats (even if they appear healthy) or other potentially infected animals, they must use Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) and practise good hygiene principles when wearing and after removing PPE.
- Vets and veterinary staff who are bitten, scratched or come into contact with saliva from a bat or an animal believed to be infected with ABLV must immediately take these actions:

1. Contact your local medical practitioner or the Department Health and Human Services Communicable Disease Unit on 1300 651 160, regardless of the severity of the wound or having any previous rabies vaccination – they will advise on the need for and supply of post-exposure prophylaxis.
2. Immediately wash the affected area with soap and water for a minimum period of 5 minutes.
3. Apply a virucidal antiseptic such as iodine-based solutions or alcohol (ethanol).
4. Thoroughly flush any exposed mucous membranes in the eyes, nose or mouth with water.
5. Do not suture the wound unless unavoidable.
6. Report suspected or confirmed cases of Rabies/ABLV in animals (a Notifiable Disease) to Agriculture Victoria on the Emergency Animal Disease Watch Hotline 1800 675 888 (24/7) or to your local Agriculture Victoria Animal Health and Welfare staff. Agriculture Victoria can advise on how to apply for animal vaccines if required.

### More information

- Australian Bat Lyssavirus (ABLV) Information for Veterinarians [WORD] factsheet at Rabies and Australian Bat Lyssavirus - Agriculture Victoria
- Rabies and Australian Bat Lyssavirus – Victorian Department of Health.
- Australian bat lyssavirus infection - Better Health Channel, Victorian Department of Health



## EMERGENCY ANIMAL DISEASE PREPAREDNESS PROGRAM UPDATES

### UPDATES FROM AGRICULTURE VICTORIA

#### ENGAGING PRIVATE VETERINARIANS SERVICES PATHWAYS PROJECT

**Veterinarians will play a critical role in supporting the Victorian Government in the event of an emergency animal disease (EAD) incursion.**

Agriculture Victoria is continuing to build its veterinary service capability through a project to engage private veterinarians. With the increasing demand for veterinary care and the unique challenges posed by an EAD, it is important for the Department to explore opportunities to ensure the highest standards of care and expertise.

Consistent with the [national guidelines for the engagement of private veterinarians during an Emergency Animal Disease response](#) (June 2023), Agriculture Victoria has developed two pathways to engage private veterinarians to address the need for veterinary services to complement existing capabilities and resources:

- Service Level Agreements - recommended for sole traders and veterinary practices with appropriate professional indemnity and public liability insurance. More information: [service level agreement for the provision of veterinary services](#)
- Casual Employment Contracts - recommended for individuals who have no appropriate professional indemnity and public liability insurance.

If you are interested in supporting the Department in emergency responses, please [complete this short form](#) (to help identify the engagement pathway that best suits your needs).

Agriculture Victoria and the Board will continue to keep Victorian vets up to date with information on the status of EAD risks and response opportunities through regular communication channels. If you have any questions, please email [ead.workforce@agriculture.vic.gov.au](mailto:ead.workforce@agriculture.vic.gov.au).

#### NATIONAL BIOSECURITY TRAINING HUB NOW OPEN!

Australia's first one-stop shop for online biosecurity training is now open and available to anyone looking to increase their understanding of biosecurity.



Agriculture Victoria has partnered with Plant Health Australia (PHA), the Queensland Department of Agriculture and Fisheries, New South Wales Department of Primary Industries, and Animal Health Australia (AHA) to create a **National Biosecurity Training Hub**.

The Hub is a centralised platform that supports biosecurity prevention, preparedness, response and recovery by providing users with access to the latest biosecurity-related training materials and courses suited to different industries, levels and skill sets.

The Hub currently has 64 online training courses, with plans for continuous expansion. Organisations with biosecurity training packages interested in contributing to the Hub are encouraged to contact PHA via [nbth@phau.com.au](mailto:nbth@phau.com.au).

**BIOSECURITY TRAINING HUB:**  
**[HTTPS://BIOTRAININGHUB.COM.AU](https://biotraininghub.com.au)**

#### SHORT COURSE: WORKING IN AN EAD RESPONSE

One of the courses you can do on the biosecurity hub is the short foundational course, 'Working in an Emergency Animal Disease (EAD) response', which introduces the concepts of:

- Australasian Inter-Service Incident Management System (AIIMS) awareness
- Biosecurity emergency response
- Come clean, stay clean, go clean – when visiting farms
- Foot-and-mouth disease awareness
- Lumpy skin disease awareness

**Enrol via AgVic website:** [Working in an EAD response](#)

### RECORDINGS AVAILABLE FROM EAD VETERINARY ENGAGEMENT FORUM

**In June 2023, Agriculture Victoria held a webinar for vets, providing an overview of:**

- the Victorian Government EAD Preparedness Program
- biosecurity threats and current risk status
- what a biosecurity response is like in Victoria
- the potential role of vets in an EAD response

- how Agriculture Victoria will work with vets during the preparedness phase, and any response to an EAD event
- how vets will be engaged
- training opportunities, and
- other matters for consideration.

Recordings: [Information for veterinarians and epidemiologists](#)

## AGRICULTURE VICTORIA PURCHASES NEW MOBILE DIAGNOSTIC VAN

As part of the EAD preparedness program, on 21 September 2023 the Minister for Agriculture officially launched a new mobile diagnostic laboratory.

With this lab van, Agriculture Victoria can deploy scientists to process samples, conduct testing, and enter data anywhere across the state during an EAD response.

Bought from the Doherty Institute, the repurposed van comes complete with wi-fi connectivity and a microbio cabinet.

This mobile lab will alleviate the pressure on laboratories and reduce the need to transport thousands of samples for testing.

### CURRENT BIOSECURITY ALERTS

Anthrax was detected in cattle in the Shepparton region in February 2024, resulting in the vaccination of 6,000 sheep and cattle. Read more on the current situation: [Anthrax in Victorian cattle](#)

#### Subscribe to:

- [VetWatch newsletter](#) animal disease surveillance updates (Agriculture Victoria)
- [Biosecurity matters newsletter](#) (Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry)

## SURVEY ON EARLY YEAR VETS' COMPETENCY IN BEHAVIOURAL MEDICINE

Australian veterinarians with up to 3 years of experience in companion animal practice are invited to participate in a research study conducted by the University of Sydney, 'Evaluation of self-perceived competence in behavioural medicine of recent veterinary graduates'.

This anonymous 5-minute survey asks how recent veterinary graduates perceive their competency in behavioural medicine. The researchers aim to use the insights gained from the survey to help improve the Australian veterinary curriculum so graduates are well-prepared when they enter the profession.

The survey has human research ethics approval from the University of Sydney Human Ethics Committee [Project ID: 2023/763]. More information: [Participant Information Statement](#)

**SURVEY LINK: [Evaluation of self-perceived competence in behavioural medicine of recent veterinary graduates](#) - Closes mid-April 2024.**

## NEW TRACEABILITY TECHNOLOGY MAPS A COMPLETE TRAIL

New livestock traceability technology has also been developed and is being introduced into saleyards and abattoirs across Victoria.

In partnership with Allflex Australia and Shearwell Australia, the system will be able to record the details of individual animals from electronic identification ear tags and panel readers, as they move through the gate.

This has strengthened Victoria's livestock traceability capability and boosted confidence in Victoria's biosecurity system.

### AGRICULTURE VICTORIA EAD CONTACTS

- Emergency Animal Disease hotline staffed by vets 24 hours a day/365 days a year: **1800 675 888**
- District Veterinary Officers/Animal health officers: call 136 186
- EAD preparedness queries: [ead.workforce@agriculture.vic.gov.au](mailto:ead.workforce@agriculture.vic.gov.au)
- Website: [www.agriculture.vic.gov.au](http://www.agriculture.vic.gov.au)

## VETERINARIANS, WHAT DON'T YOU GET PAID FOR? NEW AVA SURVEY

The Board thanks all Victorian vets who participated in the AVA's 2023 veterinary workforce survey, which has now closed.

You are now invited to participate in a second work-related survey being conducted by the AVA in collaboration with the University of Melbourne.

This survey aims to understand and measure what is being provided for free, at low cost or a discount by the Australian veterinary profession, and why. The 20-minute to 1-hour survey is voluntary and anonymous, and requests data and comments from individual veterinarians and veterinary workplaces.

The survey has human research ethics approval from the University of Melbourne [Project ID: 26670]. More information: Plain language statement - [Veterinarians: what don't you get paid for?](#)

**SURVEY LINK: [Veterinarians, what don't you get paid for?](#) - Closes 17 June 2024**

## SUPPORT AND INFORMATION FOR VETERINARY PRACTITIONERS

### VETBOARD VICTORIA RESOURCES

- [Videos and factsheets about veterinary boards, how they handle complaints and how you can respond to a complaint](#)
- [Download proof of registration or update your contact details via My Account](#)
- [Registration](#)
- [Complaints](#)
- [Guidelines for appropriate standards of veterinary practice and veterinary facilities](#)
- [Veterinary Practice Act 1997](#)
- [Other laws relating to veterinary practice including Drugs, Poisons and Controlled Substances Act 1981](#)
- [About the Board and Board members](#)
- [Annual reports](#)

### MEDICINES, MICROCHIPPING, RADIATION

#### Medicines & Poisons Regulation (MPR)

##### Branch, Victorian Department of Health

- [Medicines and Poisons Regulation](#)
- [Legislative requirements for vets](#)
- [Factsheet – Key requirements for vets](#)
- [MPR Enquiry form](#)

#### Prescribing guidelines and resources:

- [AMR Vet Collective antimicrobial guidelines](#)

#### Microchipping

- [Authorised implanter course for veterinarians](#) - Victorian Division AVA
- [Greyhound Microchip Registry](#) 8329 1139

#### Radiation Safety Unit, Vic Health:

- [Individual use licences](#)
- [Management licences](#)

### COVID-19 INFORMATION

- National hotline: **1800 020 080**
- [Coronavirus Vic Gov](#)
- [Business and work](#)
- [COVIDSafe Plan](#)
- [Coronavirus \(COVID-19\)](#) - WorkSafe

### SUPPORT FOR VETS

- **Australian Veterinary Association:** [telephone counselling service](#) 1300 687 327 **both** for AVA members **and** the vet professionals who work for them
- **AVA THRIVE** [veterinary wellness portal](#)
- **Lifeline** 13 1114 & [Get help](#)
- **Beyond Blue:** 1800 512 348 & [Get mental health support](#)
- **SANE** 1800 187 263 & [SANE services](#)
- **1800RESPECT** 1800 737 732 & [website](#)
- **Mensline Australia** 1300 789 978 & [website](#) (delivered by Lifeline)
- **Head to Health** [Australian Gov resources](#)
- **Mental health support** [Victorian Gov resources](#)

### AGRICULTURE VICTORIA INFORMATION

#### Emergency Disease Hotline

- 1800 675 888 to report suspected emergency diseases - staffed by vets 24 hours a day, 365 days a year.

#### Local animal health staff

- Call 136 186 to get in touch with Agriculture Victoria District Veterinary Officers and Animal Health Officers located throughout Victoria.

#### General contacts

- Customer service line 136 186
- Email biosecurity queries or feedback to [animal.biosecurity@agriculture.vic.gov.au](mailto:animal.biosecurity@agriculture.vic.gov.au)
- Email animal welfare queries to [pet.welfare@agriculture.vic.gov.au](mailto:pet.welfare@agriculture.vic.gov.au)

#### General information

- [www.agriculture.vic.gov.au](http://www.agriculture.vic.gov.au)
- [Biosecurity and animal diseases](#)
- [VetWatch newsletter](#) – information about animal disease surveillance
- [Antibiotic resistant infections and information for veterinarians and veterinary staff](#)
- [Animal Welfare Victoria](#)
- [Livestock and animals](#)
- [Pet care](#)

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